

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application.

Reconsideration of the subject patent application in view of the present remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants request acknowledgment of the priority claim and confirmation that the priority documents have been received. According to MPEP §1828, the International Bureau is to furnish copies of the certified priority document(s) to the designated offices. If the certified copies are not forwarded to the designated office, the Examiner may contact either the Special Program Examiner in their technology center, or contact Harry Kim at PCT-help desk (571-273-0419) for assistance in retrieving the certified copies.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §102

Claims 1-2, 5, 9-11, 13, and 15-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Harano (U.S. Patent No. 7,082,322).

Regarding claims 1 and 9, the subject matter of claims 1 and 9 is disclosed in the Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-324094, filed November 7, 2002, the priority of which is claimed in the present application. Applicants submit that the priority date (November 7, 2002) of claims 1 and 9 is prior to Harano's U.S. patent application filing date (May 20, 2003). Therefore, Harano is not a citable reference under 35 U.S.C. 102(e).

In order to perfect Applicants' claim of priority, Applicants submit herewith English language translation of the Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-324094 and statement that the translation of the Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-324094 is accurate. Applicants submit that the Japanese Patent Applications No. 2002-324094 satisfies the enablement and description requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.

The remaining claims in this application depend on claim 1 or 9, and thus are patentable for at least the same reasons as the parent claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §103

Claims 6-8 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harano in view of Toyoda (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0160725 A1).

As discussed above regarding claims 1 and 9, Harano is not a citable reference for the present application. Thus, Harano cannot be used to reject claims 6-8 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. NGB-38204.

Respectfully submitted,
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